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PREPAREDNESS AND 4-H CLUB WORK\*

C. B. Smith  
Formerly Assistant Director

It is the business of agricultural extension to help interpret to rural people the national preparedness program. I like the suggestion of the club leaders and the Federal Extension Service that 4-H Club forces take part in this interpretation. The more we attempt to explain the program the more likely we ourselves are to understand it.

Wars are fought and won by the youth of the Nation. It is highly pertinent that youth know in advance what it is preparing for and what preparation is necessary. The thing that is uppermost in the Nation's mind just now is to be free to live the life we want to live, to have a voice in how we shall be governed, to worship in accordance with our conscience, to publicly approve right or rebuke wrong, to be governed by the majority and by just laws, to walk upright and to fear no man.

These are things common to a democracy. These are things the Nation wants to preserve. This is what the Nation proposes to be prepared to defend. Explanation and interpretation of these things may well be a part of the immediate future of 4-H Club work.

If we are going to help the Government in the preparedness program, it would seem desirable, first, to know what the government proposes to do. As we understand the matter, the Nation proposes to build (1) a strong army, navy, and air force, so powerful and purposeful they cannot be defeated, (2) to build up for ourselves abundant supplies of food, fibers, and other materials to meet our needs for the duration of any possible war, (3) to develop unity of purpose and strengthen the morale of the people and their will to persevere and win, and (4) to maintain, insofar as possible, the normal functioning of all our civic and social institutions and to stress those features that build up the individual and exalt the Nation.

First, as to abundant supplies, the Nation in its preparedness program must provide abundant food and fiber supplies, both for itself and its allies. 4-H Club members are helping to augment the Nation's food and fiber supplies and will continue to do so. Not only are present members making their contribution to increased food and fiber supplies in their project work but also a substantial proportion of the 8,000,000 former members, who now manage or operate farms and homes of their own and who are profiting by their 4-H Club experience. All our years of work in carrying on production projects are seen to be fundamental preparation for the Nation's preparedness program immediately.

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before us. You do not go astray when you teach youth how to grow crops and livestock and produce and preserve food. Club leaders will want to continue and strengthen this part of the club program.

Second, as to building a strong army - able armies are built from able men. Wars are won by the side having the most foresight, the greatest intelligence, and the best leadership. The best soldiers are intelligent soldiers. 4-H Club work builds self-reliant, resourceful, intelligent men and women. And in modern war both men and women are involved. The chief business of 4-H Club work in the preparedness program would seem to be to keep right on producing self-reliant, resourceful, capable men and women. That is one thing of which the nations never produce a surplus. We may have 50,000 planes, 800 fighting ships that guard the seas, and 12,000 tanks to protect our land; but, unless we have able, resourceful, intelligent men to make them effective in battle, we shall still be a weak nation.

4-H Club work in its daily program is building men and women to live, and to live the great life here and now. Its first purpose is not soldier building but man building. But, if the Nation needs men for its defense, it will find that in 4-H Club work men and women trained to live are unafraid, if need be, to die. Club work will continue to build men and women.

How does 4-H Club work go about building men and women who can think, have faith in themselves, and accomplish? May we point out some of the ways? First of all, 4-H Club members in their regular club work are given significant tasks to do, things to accomplish. These tasks to do and things to accomplish are real farm and home and community problems, requiring planning, work, patience, records, public demonstrations and exhibits of their progress and skill. Each club member has some guidance from leaders, but for the most part every club member is on his or her own - must select material, plant, cultivate, harvest, and store; or feed, tend, market, preserve, or do something else that develops in the individual skill, knowledge, self-reliance. In 4-H Club work, members use their minds and hands to a purpose. It is not so much abstract as concrete learning they get. That is why 4-H Club members are unafraid of work and can do things. And that is the kind of people that are wanted in a national preparedness program - men who are self-reliant, who can work with their hands, and can think in battle. In modern warfare, with tanks and planes and lightning speed, much more is being left to the initiative of the corporal and individual soldier than ever before.

Again, a preparedness program calls for strong, vigorous men and women abounding in health; sound minds develop out of sound bodies. The development of individual health is a regular part of the 4-H Club program. It is a part of almost every club project. It is the first essential of abundant living. Health is a part of the 4-H Club creed and a goal of attainment toward which every club member pledges himself upon joining the club. It is attained through the growing of good gardens, through outdoor work and recreation, through carrying on poultry, dairy, and animal projects and the setting of a good table, through club camps,

nature trails, and study, and through the doing of things of importance. The Battle of Waterloo was won on the cricket fields of England. And so, it seems to me, we shall want to keep right on in our club work in developing strong, healthy men and women as a part of the preparedness program.

Then, 4-H Club work gives its members practice in democracy, which is part of a national preparedness program. They work together in groups, they meet in clubs, they work in cooperative ways to accomplish their tasks. They conduct their meetings in an orderly way. They observe parliamentary procedure. These things give training in democracy and citizenship, and these things are all a part of national preparedness and the development of coordinated economic, social, and fighting forces. We want, in American life, tolerant men and women, men and women who abide by the decisions of the majority. You absorb some of these virtues when you practice parliamentary procedure, pledge allegiance to the flag, and sing the songs of the Nation.

Increasingly, too, 4-H Club groups are holding citizenship exercises when its members reach the age of 21. This helps give emphasis to their new relationship to government and their individual responsibilities for its policies. National unity is thus promoted through 4-H Club work and national morale built. We will want to strengthen all these things in the preparedness program before us.

Most significant of all, 4-H Club work builds men and women for the Nation's preparedness program through its policy of standing for the righteous. It develops a right attitude of mind toward work, toward winning and losing contests, toward things fair and honest, things clean and wholesome. It is righteous men and women that exalt a nation and in the end conquer. Club leaders stand for the right. Their attitude permeates down to the members of every club.

Reverence and faith in God are a part of the Nation's preparedness program. We see it in the Nation's history - in Washington at Valley Forge, in Stonewall Jackson on the battlefields of Virginia, in Lincoln's inaugural addresses. Righteous soldiers are invincible soldiers and righteous armies unbeatable armies. 4-H Club work teaches right living, love of country and home; and that is what people fight for. Paul says: "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." National preparedness calls for the continuance of the spirit of the Lord in all our club program.

In addition to these things, the Federal Extension Service in its recent excellent suggestions of what 4-H Clubs can do in furtherance of national preparedness, points the need of work in the 4-H Clubs looking to a better understanding of the social and economic forces at work, particularly in the Western Hemisphere. Papers and speakers and debates on these subjects may well be a part of most of the monthly club meetings throughout the year. The more we know about our neighbors and the various social organizations about us, the more we are likely to understand them and work peacefully with them.

In addition we would call attention to the statement of the Federal Secretary of Agriculture, Claude R. Wickard, in his speech before the Land Grant College Association meeting here in Chicago in which he states, in referring to 4-H Club work as an agency in teaching democracy, that "Here is the most important group of all."

We would call attention further to the recommendation of President Roosevelt's committee given before the Land Grant College Association on Inter-American Cooperation in Agricultural Education to the effect that 4-H Club work be put on an international basis, and that one or more clubs be started in the southern Americas to demonstrate their usefulness in agricultural education.

If this is what the Secretary of Agriculture thinks of 4-H Club work as an agency in teaching democracy, if a presidential committee, in this time of crisis, sees in 4-H Club work something that might well be extended to the countries of South America, does it not seem to you that as a preparedness program and defense measure 4-H Club work might well be substantially expanded in the United States, in funds, in trained teaching staff, and in club membership?

Increased membership of rural youth in 4-H Club work is directly correlated with increased funds and teaching staff. Should we not in the immediate future hold fast to the things we have been teaching, give added stress to the teaching of citizenship, democracy, righteousness, and bring to the attention of our administrative officers the need of increased funds, teaching staff, and club membership if 4-H Club work is to measure up in any full degree to the requirements of the national preparedness program.

That is the needed preparedness program--4-H Club work, and more of it here in the United States and throughout the world.

As we view the matter, then, the regular program of the 4-H Clubs is already a substantial preparedness program, both for the individual in life's journey and for the Nation in its preparation for continued peace. There would seem to be needed at the present time intensification of that phase of the 4-H program that teaches love of country and the virtues of democracy. That can be brought about through enriching the monthly club program of every community everywhere with papers and discussions on different aspects of our country's history and development, comparisons of our form of government with forms of government in other nations, through putting on plays by the club of significant events, through the cooperation of State and Federal extension services in developing movies with a patriotic motive, through the singing of patriotic songs at monthly club meetings and club rallies, at achievement days, and at all State, regional, and national events.

In summary we would leave with you these thoughts:

- (1) 4-H Club work should help interpret to the Nation the preparedness program.

- (2) It should continue to stress in its program the growing of crops and livestock and so help to maintain the Nation's food and fiber supplies.
- (3) 4-H Club work should keep right on building self-reliant, resourceful, capable men and women through its regular program, which requires planning, work, records, exhibits, demonstrations, reports, debates, discussion, and such matters.
- (4) Club work should continue to stress abounding health; sound bodies are the forerunners of sound minds that can think and act in battle.
- (5) Club work may well give increased effort to conducting its work along democratic lines. The best way to teach democracy is to practice it.
- (6) Citizenship exercises should form an increasing part of the 4-H preparedness program for our older 4-H Club members.
- (7) 4-H Club work should continue to stand for the righteous. It is righteous men and women that exalt a nation and make unbeatable armies.
- (8) Patriotism in youth is developed through the recital of the heroic deeds of the men and women of the Nation who have achieved. Patriotic plays, pageants, movies, and songs help to develop and stimulate patriotism. Efforts in these fields may well be increased.

The song, "There'll Always Be an England," supports and inspires today the defenders of the British Empire and the whole English-speaking world, just as the sign of the Cross has lifted up and inspired the whole Christian church down through the last 1,900 years. Sentiment, idealism, faith are what build morale and unconquerability in men and women and nations. We needn't be afraid of putting these things in increasing degree into our 4-H Club programs. They are mighty fortresses of preparedness and defense. Shall we not conduct all our monthly club meetings in accordance with democratic ways and make each one of them a patriotic, inspiring event?

If we do this, if we give 4-H Club members an understanding of democracy, if we give them a part in the Nation's preparedness program, if we practice democracy in our club programs, if we continue to stand for high ideals and the righteous, if we continue to build real men and women, 4-H Club work will have done its mite in the preparedness program. We shall always be a free people. There will always be an America.

